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II. — *Notes on Homeric Zoology.*

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A RECENT examination of Buchholz's extensive work, *Homerische Realien*, and especially of the second part of the first volume, entitled *Homerische Zoologie*, led me to take issue with the author on the main points of his argument. Buchholz would have us assume that a very complete picture of the animal-world in the era of the Homeric poems can be elaborated from the poems themselves, — our only source of information. He has collated every reference, has classified the animals definitely known, has made a plausible classification of those comparatively unknown; but his lists, which are to stand for so much of the animal-types, their life and habits, as was known in the Homeric age, appear to me to present neither a complete nor an undistorted picture of Homeric zoology.

For various reasons, which will presently appear, and some of which are inherent in the very nature of the poems, there is a strong probability (1) that animal-life at that period must have been more varied and comprehensive than the testimony of the poems allows us to assume; (2) that the absence of any well-marked species from the text of the poems cannot in itself be accepted as proof of the non-existence of the species on Greek soil at that period; and (3) that reference to an animal-species in the poems does not of necessity argue such frequent occurrence of said species as would indicate considerable familiarity with it.

There occur altogether 62 different names of specific animals in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; in this enumeration certain names are allowed to count individually, though they represent one and the same animal, as *ἡμίονος* and *οὐρεὺς*, *λαγῳός* and *πτῳξ*, while on the other hand the various terms *πρόγονοι*, *μέτασσαι*, and *ἔρσαι* are embraced in the generic

term *ῥῆς*. Of these 62 animal-names there are 38 that occur but *once* or *twice* in the two great poems. From the remaining list of 24 names that occur more than *twice*, several might be stricken as doubtful; thus the *generic* name *ἰχθυς* has been allowed in this list, so that there might not be an omission of this entire class, seeing that the eel (*ἔγχελυς*) is not considered by many reputable critics as part of the *ἰχθυς*-group; again, neither *μέλισσα* nor *χρῖν* would belong to this list of 24, if in either case we separate the wild and the domesticated species, which are as radically different as *σὺς κάπρος* and *σὺς αὐλιζομένη*. It is furthermore an open question with many commentators, whether the vague references to the *ἀρνευτήρ* permit us to consider it a bird, the diver, or whether the passages refer to a human diver; I cannot, for my own part, escape the conviction that the context everywhere points clearly to a *man* diving (note especially the verb: *ἀρνευτήρι ἐοικὼς κάππεσ' ἀπ' ἰκτιόφιν* (μ 413), *ἀπὸ πύργου* (M 385), *ἀπὸ δίφρου* (Π 742). An elimination of these 4 doubtful types would leave but 20 animal-names that occur more than *twice* in the 28,000 lines of the two poems. If we should advance a step further, and set aside the names belonging to pronounced domesticated types (*βοῦς*, *ἵππος*, *ῥῆς*, *αἶξ*, *κύων*), reference to the one or the other of which is unavoidable either in the peaceful pastoral scenes of the *Odyssey* or in the martial setting of the *Iliad*, it might appear that that portion of the animal-world with which in its *state of freedom* the Homeric poet is particularly familiar, if reasonable frequency of reference and finer gradation of attributes can be considered an indication of familiarity, were actually limited to some 15 species. A conclusion more erroneous than this it would be difficult to conceive.

The scanty introduction of animals is due, as has already been indicated, to the nature of the Epic poems. The deeds of heroes and their relations to the gods are pivotal themes; to these all others are subordinated. Opportunities for descriptions of natural scenery are not wanting in the framework of the poems, yet are not enlarged upon; the artifice of elaborate word-painting in picturing a scene is contrary to

the Epic directness of narrative and incident. The Iliad is in this respect more chary of scenic effects than the Odyssey; the latter admits in several instances a couple of lines where a statement of the accessories of landscape is essential to the clearness of the narrative, as in ε 63 ff., where the description of the grotto of Calypso is plainly intended to complete the picture of the enchantress; the Epic poet treats it as an instrument by which she holds Odysseus spell-bound: 'at its sight even a deathless god who came thither might wonder and be glad at heart.' As with the objects of inanimate nature, so, too, the references to animals are subordinated to the overpowering interest that men and gods excite, except in those cases to which we must now turn.

It is in a general way familiar to all how prominently animals figure in the Homeric comparisons; in aiming at more definite conclusions, I have endeavored to combine into a primary group all those passages, in which the deeds or sufferings of animals constitute part of the immediate and actual economy of the poems (thus Iliad A αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεύχε κύνεσσιν οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι and οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπῳχετο καὶ κύνας ἀργούς. A secondary group will then embrace (1) those cases where animals are introduced in comparisons, and (2) where they are introduced as *symbols* of divinities, as tokens, miracles, etc. No one can fail to recognize that in the celebrated passage B 308, ἐνθ' ἐφάνη μέγα σῆμα δράκων ἐπὶ νῶτα δαφεινός κ. τ. λ. the introduction of the serpent serves a different purpose than in the strictly narrative character of B 721 (Φιλοκτήτην) μοχθίζοντα κακῷ δολοφρόνος ὕδρου, that the δράκων and its peculiarities are quoted as data of the divine miracle; similarly in M 200 the bird of Zeus drops from its talons the writhing snake into the throng of the Trojans, Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο; symbolical, too, is the reference in A 26 to the dark-blue snakes wrought on the breast-plate of Agamemnon, 'like rainbows that the son of Kronos hath set in the clouds, a marvel of mortals.' Again in B 311 ff. occurs in the account of the miracle the only Homeric reference to the στρουθός, though from the characteristic description of its motherly instincts it must

have been accurately known to the poet ; and in the Doloneia (K 274) the one mention of the night-heron (ἐρωδιός) as a bird of omen, though the heron must have been a well-known bird on the Trojan plain. With the exception of four passages in which the wild-pigeon (πελεία) is introduced in comparisons, every other reference to it may be designated as symbolical ; in Odyssey μ 62, in Iliad Ψ 857, and in Δ 633, where on the embossed goblet of Nestor are represented two golden doves, symbolical of his prophetic foresight. Of seven cases in which the γύψ (vulture) is mentioned, at least three are distinctly symbolical. In Odyssey χ 30 the threat of the suitors addressed to Odysseus : τῶ σ' ἐνθάδε γύπες ἔδονται is but a repetition in another form of what immediately preceded : νῦν τοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος ; so, too, in Iliad Π 386 and Δ 236. The important part that the eagle plays in prophecies in Homer is attested by the following references : Iliad Ω 310 Priam prays for his appearance on the right as bird of omen and messenger of Zeus ; to the Trojans he appears on the left, M 200 ; to Telemachus, about to set sail for Sparta, on the right (ο 160) ; on the left to the suitors planning the death of Telemachus (ν 242). In the scoffing words of the suitor Eurymachus (οὐδὲ πάντες ὄρνιθες ἐναίσιμοι) the belief in the eagle's prophetic agency is involuntarily admitted. As symbol of propitiation at religious ceremonials appears the wild boar in Iliad T 266, and Odyssey ψ 276. The lion, too, notwithstanding frequent mention, never occurs as an actual participant in the events of the poems ; and Iliad Σ 583 evidently refers to a symbolical representation of attacking lions, elaborated by Hephaistos on the shield of Achilles. Finally, the introduction of the dolphin into the poems partakes of a symbolical nature. In Odyssey μ 95, where Scylla is mentioned as consuming dolphins or sea-dogs 'whereof the deep-voiced Amphitrite feeds countless flocks' there seems to lie a peculiar significance in the connection with Amphitrite, a divinity vaguely outlined in the Homeric theogony. Void of a definitely marked personality, she is hardly more in the Homeric writings than an allegory of the restless, roaring flood. In view

of the later legendary elaboration of the Amphitrite-myth, of her friendly relations to the dolphin that brings her from the obscure recesses of Oceanos back to Poseidon, and of her jealousy of the nymph Scylla whom she converts by magic herbs into a monster, it is well to bear this passage of the Odyssey in mind; may not the symbolical character of this narrative have been the starting-point for the highly wrought myths of the later writers? To the examples already quoted might be added the two instances in Iliad Φ, where the term *κυνόμνια* is applied as an insulting epithet, indicative of impudence and effrontery; here, however, Buchholz in assuming the existence of the dog-fly in the Homeric zoology, has apparently been misled by an erroneous application of a reading in Hesychius. The latter (ed. Moritz Schmidt) says: *κυνόμνια· ἀναιδής, ἰταμή, καὶ θρασεῖα. ὁ μὲν γὰρ κύων ἀναιδής· ἡ δὲ μνῖα θρασεῖα.* He is evidently corroborating his definition in detail, showing how the characteristics of the two animals constitute the basis for the composition of the term; the *κυνόμνια* is therefore in all probability like the *ἀρνευτήρ*,—no animal at all.

From the consideration of the allegorical and symbolical references to animals in Iliad and Odyssey, we pass to the cases where animals are introduced in comparisons; for our purposes it is however immaterial whether the *outward* form of the simile, as recognized by the Greek rhetoricians, is adhered to, or not; the essentials of a comparison are as evident in Iliad N 819, *ἀρήσῃ Διὶ θάσσανας ἱρήκων ἔμεναι καλλιτρίχας ἵππους*, as in the more formal description of Hector, eager for the fray, *ὥς δ' ὅτε τίς τε κύων συνὸς ἀγρίου ἢ λέοντος ἄπτηται κατόπισθε.*

In this wider acceptance of the term simile, then, we find that there are at least 31 animal-species *never* mentioned, except in comparison, and *seven* others, every reference to which is *either* in a simile, or else symbolical; even of the remainder, quite a number but for a single reference would swell the list of those species mentioned in comparisons only; thus the *μνῖαι*, but for Iliad T 23, and *λαγῶς*, except for Odyssey ρ 294. Four species are never mentioned in

comparisons, three of which, *κυνοραϊστής*, *ἔψ*, and *σκῶψ*, are *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα*, and the fourth, *φώκαι*, presents in the one most striking attribute that the poet dwells upon in three distinct passages, in the *δλωτάτος ὁδμή*, no inviting element of comparison. — A cursory glance at the points that are serviceable for comparison will reveal that certain *activities* of the animal-world furnish the most frequent basis of comparison ; next in frequency rank the references to *qualities*, as courage, obstinacy, cruelty, insolence, timidity, maternal instinct, and least numerous are those that refer to local bodily characteristics, as *σφήκες μέσον αἰόλοι*. Again, we cannot fail to discern in the mention of certain types a very close knowledge of the animal-world ; besides the earth-worm, *σκώληξ*, there are mentioned three species of sea-mews, *κορώνη*, *αἰθυία*, and *λάρος*, so closely akin that ancient commentators, like Hesychius and Arrian, as well as modern ornithologists, are at a loss definitely to discriminate them ; similarly the *αἰετός*, with its two kindred species, *φήνη* and *ὄρνις ἀνοπαῖα*, the latter difficult of identification ever since Aristarchus and Eustathius.

In view of such specialized acquaintance with animal-types that are not exceptionally frequent on the shores of the Ægean, there can be but one mode of accounting for the absence of other familiar types from the Homeric poems, viz., that occasion for reference to them and their characteristics did not naturally suggest itself. From these types it will of course be necessary to exclude those groups of animals whose introduction into Greece in later historic times admits of positive proof, as in the cases of the *ἀλεκτρύων*, the peacock, and the cat (V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustierte*). In all other cases the burden of proof should rest upon those who claim late or foreign origin for the species not mentioned in the Homeric poems. For though in several instances we can trace in the names of animals their Indo-germanic prototypes, yet we can detect in the development of the Greek form the evidence that the name has come into the language as part of the original Indo-germanic possessions, and has undergone such changes as correspond

to the spirit of the language,—has in a word not been grafted upon it as an exotic at a later period ; thus in ὄρτυξ, Sanskr. vartaka, the traces of the old digamma appear in the Hesychian gloss γόρτυξ· ὄρτυξ, and in the old genitive-form quoted by the grammarians, ὄρτυκος, instead of ὄρτυγος. Finally, in proof of the accidents that determine our acquaintance with the Homeric world, it may be added that, but for the adjective forms φασσοφόνος, κτίδεος, πολύρρην, we should not have been able to add to our Homeric list of animals φάσσα, the ring-dove, ἰκτίς (marten), and ῥήν = ἀρήν. It may therefore in view of the preceding discussion be urged that the unerring accuracy of description and epithet in Iliad and Odyssey points to a fulness of information on the animal-world quite beyond the limits usually allotted, and that the species on record in these poems cannot possibly exhaust the knowledge of the animal-world possessed at that period.